

BUTLER ■ GALLERY

The Butler Gallery Collection: A Selection
March 19th – April 25th 2005

The Butler Gallery has an extraordinary resource in its fine permanent collection. Acquired over a period of sixty-two years, through gift and purchase, it is an archive to which the inquisitive eye may turn and return. Including loans from the Sir Basil Goulding Collection, the Graphic Print Studio and private collections, the Butler Gallery Collection is an eclectic catalogue which can be read and appreciated on many levels. This current selection embraces a variety of genres from landscape to seascapes, from portraiture to figuration, from still life to abstraction through painting, drawing and printmaking. Coming to the Collection as the Butler's new Director, this exhibition represents the guilty pleasure of choosing works that are beautiful as well as compelling. To appraise a sweeping view of some of the great works in the collection several broad themes have been hung 'salon' style.

Jack B. Yeats exemplifies bucolic Irish landscape in the fantastical *The Fairy Dell*, while *Dublin Bay*, by Norah McGuinness, is captured in a height of activity with two seagulls conversing busily in the foreground. The sea, lakes and rivers are also embarked upon with movement and grace. From Charles Brady's definitive strokes of yellow sand, surf and sea in *Evening Shore at Merrion* to *A Water Spout* by Paul Sandby, to the glassy *Upper Lake Glendalough* by Robert C. Seymour.

This selection embraces figuration in many guises: portraits, nudes in social and domestic narratives, as well as satires, allegories, whimsies and fantasies. Martin Folan holds nothing back in his irreverent homage to *Andy Warhol* while Denis Farrell's poignant *Rocking Horse* beats with a strong heart. Patrick Collins' evocative paintings *Nude I* and *Nude II* represent anonymous imperfect bodies, while Maine Jellet's concise ink drawings *Nude* and *The Art Class* make for good allies. Michael Cullen's interpretation of *The Three Graces* titillates with an abundance of cheeky pink paint. The passage of time marks a new viewing of Robert Ballagh's *Kite*; a controversial work in the 1970's, it now reads as naughty but very nice. Portraits are abundantly represented, including works by Marie Louise Martin, Barry Cooke, William Orpen, Sir John Lavery and Louis le Brocquy.

A suite of eight aquatints by the American artist James Turrell opens the exhibition with light and space. Abstraction is articulated by Patrick Scott in his tempera on canvas *Red Device*, in Cecil King's elegant pastels and works by Fionnuala Ni Chiosain and Emil Schumaker. This auspicious collection is a visual delight and exemplifies the best of Irish art. We are privileged to have its home base here in Kilkenny.

Solas, a program run by the Butler Gallery, which introduces children to contemporary art, is scheduled for March 20th, April 3rd, April 17th from 11:00 am -12:30 pm.

ADMISSION FREE

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